



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH - GOVERNOR

NEWS

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Governor Blagojevich announces completion of Dan Ryan reconstruction

*A safer and wider Dan Ryan Expressway;
IDOT to open up all lanes to traffic ahead of schedule*

CHICAGO – Alongside area legislators, law enforcement and transportation officials, Governor Rod R. Blagojevich today cut the ribbon at the 39th Street entrance ramp to the outbound Dan Ryan, marking the ahead of schedule completion of the Dan Ryan Expressway Reconstruction Project - an historic and unprecedented effort to improve safety and provide congestion relief on one of the busiest expressways in the country.

Governor Blagojevich was joined by Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Secretary Milton R. Sees and the IDOT engineers who supervised the project and community leaders from Chicago's Southside at the ribbon cutting ceremony. All lanes of the 11-mile expressway are expected to be open overnight tonight, weather permitting, ahead of the Oct. 31 completion date.

"The complexity of this project, combined with our commitment to respecting the residents who live near the Dan Ryan, required an unprecedented effort," said Governor Blagojevich "We're very proud of our work on the Dan Ryan and now the entire region stands to benefit from a safer, wider and less congested expressway."

"The successful completion of the Dan Ryan Reconstruction Project required a remarkable degree of coordination and team work," said IDOT Secretary Sees. "By working with the community and the City of Chicago, we have built a safer expressway, we built a stronger community and we have built a brighter future for the entire region."

The Dan Ryan reconstruction project has been recognized as one of the largest "Green" construction projects in the nation, breaking new ground by requiring that contractors use ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel or retrofit construction equipment to reduce emissions. IDOT also required

contractors to limit idling of trucks and has created a state-of-the-art network of air quality monitoring stations along the expressway.

In addition, the Blagojevich Administration raised the bar for minority participation on the Dan Ryan project, reaching a historic high for a major IDOT construction project, with 20 percent of contracts being awarded to Disadvantaged Business Enterprises. The workforce on the Dan Ryan project was 50 percent minority, according to surveys conducted by IDOT.

In the past two years, IDOT has completely ground all lanes of the Dan Ryan into rubble and rebuilt the roadway from the ground up. The new pavement is designed to last for 30 years and consists of a 24-inch recycled gravel sub-base, a six-inch asphalt base and 14 inches of continuous steel reinforced concrete. The rebuilt expressway will serve more than 300,000 vehicles a day between Roosevelt Road, just south of downtown Chicago, through the Bishop Ford/I-57 interchange at 95th St. on the city's South Side. The cost of the project for construction and engineering is \$975 million.

IDOT said that there will be additional landscaping work and construction of knee-high concrete walls and fencing along the Dan Ryan frontage roads that will continue into 2008.

Among the benefits provided under the new Dan Ryan are the following:

- One additional lane in each direction, adding significant capacity to the expressway and reducing traffic congestion;
- Longer exit and entrance ramps to allow for safer merges into and out of traffic;
- Improved drainage to reduce pavement flooding and traffic tie-ups during heavy rains;
- High-mast, high-power lighting fixtures to provide better illumination of traffic lanes and adjacent areas;
- Aesthetic improvements, such as installation of graphic medallions designed by professional artists and Chicago Public Schools students;
- Redesigned and rebuilt interchange with the Chicago Skyway (I-90); and
- Complete rebuilding of 28 east-west bridges over the expressway.

The largest expressway reconstruction in Illinois history, the Dan Ryan project is one of a series of massive efforts to rebuild heavily used arteries that have far outlived their original projected life span. IDOT completed a similar reconstruction project on the Kingery Expressway (I-80/94 heading into Indiana) earlier this year.

IDOT officials said traffic has been flowing freely now that all lanes, ramps and bridges have been opening. IDOT reminds all motorists to observe posted speed limits, which are 45 miles per hour in the local lanes from 31st St. to the Chicago Skyway and on the elevated bridge from Roosevelt Rd., and 55 miles per hour in the express lanes and on the southern end from 67th st. to 95th St.

The original Dan Ryan Expressway was opened Dec. 15, 1962, along with the Calumet Expressway, now known as the Bishop Ford Freeway (I-94), providing non-stop travel from the Congress Expressway, now known as the Eisenhower Expressway (I-290) to 130th Street, at a cost of \$209 million. At the time, the Ryan was the widest expanse of concrete any Chicagoan

had ever seen. The highway was named after Dan Ryan, a former Cook County Board president. Ryan's role in planning the huge highway construction effort in the 1950s and 1960s began with his 1939 proposal to build a superhighway that eventually became the Kennedy Expressway (I-90/94).

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Note to editors: jpeg photos of the Dan Ryan expressway reconstruction project are available for downloading at www.danryanexpressway.com.